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BRUCE J. TALBERT'S DESIGNS.

THERE are few names more familiar to those interested in the artistic development of furniture and cabinet making, than that of Talbert. His designs have been widely published, his ideas judiciously followed, and the perfection of his work generally admitted. In fact he may be, not unreasonably, credited as a leader of the few who, in this century, have turned away from prevailing fashions to frame a new one, or made such improvements upon the old as to enlarge its usefulness. Eastlake is entitled to recognition for his efforts in this direction, and the popularity of his works attest the value of his designs. The difference between his patterns and those of Talbert, however, was extreme, as there must be between the economical and expensive.

Bruce J. Talbert was born in Dundee, Scotland, where he studied at the high school of the town, and displayed an aptness and ability for designing, sculpturing and kindred arts, that soon led to his being singled out from his companions, and brought him to the attention of a local manufacturer. His connection with the manufacturer, however, was brief, and with a mind full of ambition and projects he secured a position with an architect, and felt that he would have plenty of opportunity to develop the talent that he knew was in him. He found the duties of the architect's office were rather confining, and failed to offer the advantages he anticipated, so he left his employment and went to Glasgow. At this time he was eighteen years old.

In Glasgow he remained for several years, and established a reputation which has been attached to his name ever since. It was here, in 1860, that Mr. Talbert received the first public recognition of his efforts, which came in the form of a medal from the exhibition of a local architectural association. Encouraged by this, he entered into a competition for the medal given by the Edinburgh Architectural Institute, and secured it.

In 1862 Mr. Talbert accepted the position as assistant designer in the factories of Messrs. Doreston, Bird & Hall, of Manchester, and he was enabled, by the practical experience he gained

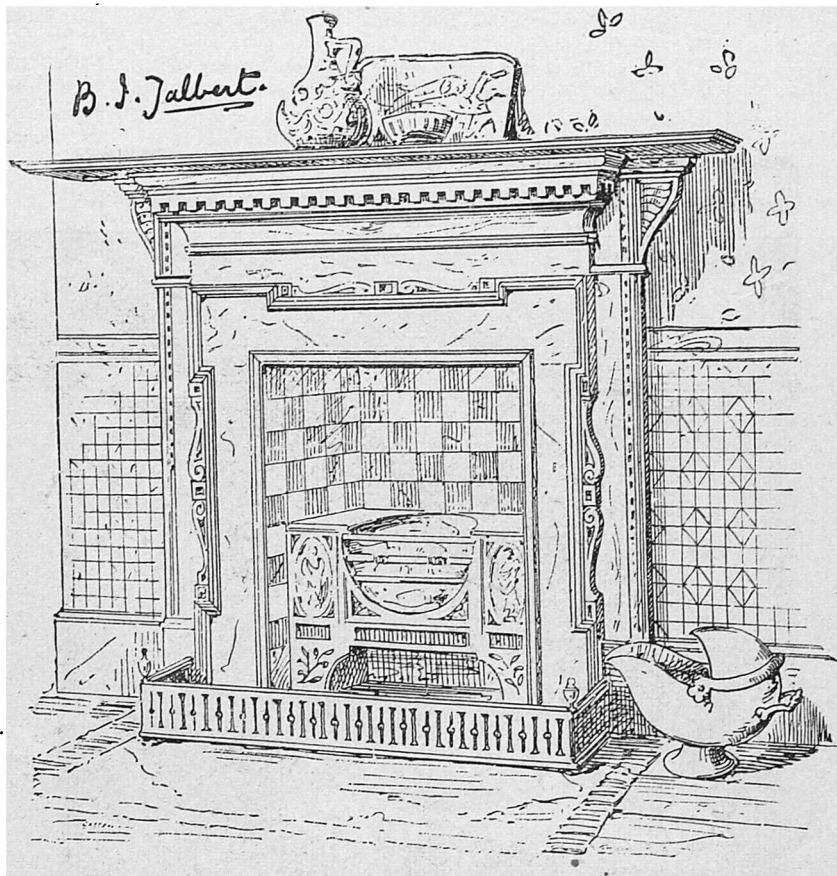
here, to improve his designing to such an extent that when he competed for the position of designer to the Coventry Art Metal Works, he was successful and was chosen from out of two hundred applicants. In his new position he had entire control of the fine work and of the designing, he gave attention to the cabinet-work, and was regarded generally as the practical man of the house. The work, however, was not up to the standard that he had in his mind, and he found it was difficult to imbue his workmen with

Mr. Talbert's best work was probably done for Messrs. Gillow & Co., in whose employ he entered from Messrs. Holland. He seemed here to have, for the first time, a corps of acceptable assistants. The designers then in the house were able and intelligent, and after grasping the real scope of their new foreman's idea, followed him with a fidelity and perfection that gave Talbert much satisfaction, and eased the cares of the close personal supervision which he had always been accustomed to give.

During his busy life, when occupied by the duties of his position and the supervision of an office, he found time to publish several works of designs, among which "Gothic Forms" and "Examples of Ancient Furniture," probably had the largest sale. His ideas were prolific, and his designs seem to have been made with little effort; he produced vast quantities of them, and at his death he left many portfolios of his works which were readily bought up by his admirers and followers.

The diversity of talent possessed by Mr. Talbert, and his thoroughness in every branch of his work, are qualities to be admired, and they can be properly appreciated by comparing the designs from his pencil, whether they be for furniture, metals, paper-hangings, tapestry or glass with the best productions of other artists.

We show upon this page a buffet and mantel designed by Mr. Talbert.



THE RAJAH'S BEDSTEAD.

There is on view in Paris at the present time a bed of rare and singular construction, which has been made to the order of an Indian prince, and is about to be sent out to him. The bedstead, which is of satinwood with large plates of silver repousse work, is very beautifully carved, and has cost upward of \$12,000. The most original part of this bed is the mattress, which has been fitted up as a musical box, so that directly any one lies down it plays tunes selected from Gounod's operas.

At the four corners of the bed are four statues, representing young girls of Greek, Spanish, Italian and French nationality, their only ornament being a gold snake bracelet twisted round the wrist which holds the fan they are waving over the sleeper. By an ingenious contrivance of the artist employed to cast these statues, the eyes have been made to move, and the realistic appearance of these young ladies is heightened by the addition of four wigs in four shades of color, supposed to be typical of each nation.—*St. James' Gazette.*

the idea that prompted his own styles. After considerable experience at the Art Metal Works, during which he improved and increased their business, he left them and went to London, where he did some designing for Messrs. Holland, and made such decided innovations and advancements in the styles then in vogue, that the firm became, for the time being, the most popular in London, and were the recipients of several medals of award from various expositions and furniture displays.

